

*Chair: Peter Burling*  
*Vice Chair: Katherine Hersh*

**Minutes**  
**December 18, 10:00 am**  
**LOB 201**

Attendance: Representative Candace Bouchard, Peter Burling, Chris Clement, Kerrie Diers, Shawn Donovan, Senator Martha Fuller-Clark, David Preece, Mark Brewer, Mike Izbicki, Michael King, Tim Moore, Steve Pesci, Ted Starkweather, Mike Tardiff, Representative Robert Williams, Bruce Woodruff

**I. Call to Order – 10:00**

**II. Public Input – *Members of the public wishing to will be given an opportunity to address the NHRTA Board.***

No public input. Peter Burling congratulated Alderman-elect Barbara Pressly on her election to the Nashua Board of Aldermen.

**III. Minutes – Minutes November 20, 2009**

**David Preece moved to approve the minutes, subject to the addition of Mike King in attendance, seconded by Mike Izbicki.**

**The minutes were approved unanimously.**

**IV. Update on Grant Process**

Peter Burling summarized the meeting with Amtrak as effective and cordial. Mike Firestone of Senator Shaheen's office was instrumental in setting up the meeting. Amtrak regards the Capitol Corridor as the logical extension of their service in the area. There are several operational models we can use. One possible avenue to use is to have the State contract with Amtrak and Amtrak negotiate with the owner/operator.

Peter Burling met with Senator Shaheen, Congressman Hodes, and Senator Rockefeller as well. Station location and integration with bus systems are key to the success of any proposals. Integration with the airport was also important. There has been legislation introduced regarding the NTSB reauthorization and a new provision that addresses poor track conditions.

Mike Izbicki and TranSystems have been working on a white paper that summarizes the information from the applications and will be submitted to the FRA Regional Office. It will be distributed today to the Authority members for review.

Peter Burling noted that Harry “Woody” Blunt, president of Concord Coach, Boston Express, Trailways is present at the meeting and thanked him for attending.

Representative Bouchard explained that the \$1 million general funds appropriated for rail from the general court will count as match, but the \$200,000 that funded a previous rail study cannot as it was funded from highway planning funds.

Representative Bouchard asked about the recent article that discussed the lack of environmental studies on the Northeast Corridor. The article addressed the Washington, DC to Boston corridor, not the NH Capitol Corridor.

This round of stimulus funds will likely go to CA and the Midwest. We will be in a good position next summer for our application.

Chris Clement explained that if we receive the planning grant funds, the funds would go to NHDOT and since the match is from the state, we will need to go out to bid through an RFP process.

Chris Clement suggested that we really need to make a statement as a State about where we stand on the support for passenger rail in New Hampshire. Operating costs, paid staff for NHRTA, and other costs need to be considered. Peter Burling stressed the need to approach our Congressional delegation to allow NH to use CMAQ funds to support operations.

Tim Moore asked if we could accomplish this through the reauthorization legislation currently working its way through Congress.

NH receives about \$8 million in CMAQ funds, similar to Maine. Once we are authorized to do this at the Federal level, it becomes the NH Legislature’s call.

David Preece asked if there had been any thought about the upcoming CMAQ round schedule. A letter of intent would need to be filed by January. Chris Clement said that we did put 3 years of operation the 10 Year Plan as a placeholder, so we should be ok in the short term.

Mike King asked if the CMAQ funds had been allocated for out years beyond three year timeframe. Three years is currently the limit we can use CMAQ funds for operations. We’re looking for a federal exemption, similar to that Maine enjoys, to use CMAQ funds without time limit.

Representative Bouchard reminded the authority that there are competing interests for CMAQ funds that we need to be aware of.

Steve Pesci stated that the CMAQ committee has solid track record of making solid, well considered decisions regarding the funds.

Woody stated that the 3 year time limit is a problem for the bus service as well. The Nashua area bus service is about to run out of funding, and will need continuing support as it is utilized heavily by commuters. It would be an on-going problem if the rail uses all the CMAQ funding. There will be huge gaps in service or problems with integrating service if all CMAQ funds are used for rail.

Peter Burling stated that it is not our intention to use all CMAQ funds for passenger rail. Our goal is an effective, efficient, integrated transportation system that utilizes all modes to minimize use of personal automobiles. What the bus system provides is key to this.

Woody stated that we need to look at this holistically. The issue of using CMAQ funds for supporting ongoing services is going to be a huge legislative debate in the reauthorization.

Tim Moore suggested that we look at establishing a rail fund to accept federal and other funds and be able to expend funds.

Peter Burling suggested we create a subcommittee to discuss the financial aspects of the project. A subcommittee was formed consisting of Bruce Woodruff, Mike Izbicki, Tim Moore, David Preece, Steve Pesci, and Peter Burling. Mark Brewer and Chris Clement will assist as needed.

David Preece asked if the long term transportation funding commission would have any bearing on this. Representative Bouchard explained that the HB 2 Commission is looking at highway and bridges, not entire transportation system.

Peter Burling asked Woody what we can do to include him in our discussions. Woody said that touching base several times per year would be sufficient. It is important going forward to remember that this is a system. There are definitely challenges, but staying in touch and working together will be key. Peter Burling said that common ticketing is important, as well as station locations that will meet the needs of both bus and rail, internet availability. Your input and insight are welcomed. Woody emphasized that system integration needs to be well managed and well thought out.

Tim Moore updated the Authority on the Plaistow project. MBTA is very interested in pursuing the expansion. The MBTA has a verbal agreement with Pan Am but nothing in writing. The Town is pursuing a change in scope of the current CMAQ funding.

## **V. Update on Economic Impact Study**

Mike Izbicki has received a draft of the Study. It is about 75% complete, and there are a few more data that need to be collected. It will probably be the first of January.

## **VI. Logo Contest Results**

Still researching the copyright issues.

## **VII. Other Discussion**

Mark Brewer thanked Mike Izbicki and David Preece for participating in the airport's master plan process and meet with the consultants. Systems integration is key so the consultants will be contacting Woody or Jim Jalbert.

Senator Fuller Clark shared the news that the Downeaster just hit ½ million riders from Exeter, and suggested that we should extend our congratulations on behalf of the Authority.

Peter Burling expressed his thanks to the Congressional Delegation in Washington. They were exceptional in their recent visit.

Next meeting dates: Senator Fuller Clark noted that on Feb 26 the Legislature will be on vacation, so we should look to meet the week prior to that.

**We will meet on Feb 19<sup>th</sup> instead of the 26<sup>th</sup> either at DOT or at the Airport if room 201 is not available.**

## **VIII. Adjourn**

**David Preece moved to adjourn, seconded by Tim Moore.**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerrie Diers